

A

## REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

British Nation.

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 Thursday, April 7. 1709.
 

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## The INTRODUCTION Continued.

AND now, Gentlemen, do you not think the Author of this has cut himself out a fine Piece of Work here, and does not every Body cry out, He will never go thro' it? To this I'll tell you a short Story, for I never care to tell a long one.

A certain Professor of Divinity in a *German* University, I do not remember the place, was appointed to Lecture in the Publick Schools upon the Prophecy of *Isaiah* —: The Gentleman set

heartily about it, *as I do upon this Work*, and read 44 Years upon the first Chapter, and never finish'd it.

He was at last ask'd, How the Prophecy should be all Expounded at that Rate? He answer'd, It was his Honour and Satisfaction to begin so great a Work, and some more Worthy should come after him and finish it.

In short, Gentlemen, I'll count it my Honour to have begun so great a Work, as the rescuing

rescuing *Scotland* from the Grave of Slander, and from the Mists and Fogs of Mismanagement, in which she has lost her self for so many Years to the Discouragement of her Gentry, and Impoverishment of her People; and if I cannot finish it, *Scotland* shall never want some Hand more capable than I to carry it on, and finish it to your much greater Advantage.

I meet with another Objection to my Work, which I must speak a Word to, before I go on.

You have Undertaken a Work here, that you can never go thro' and call your self an honest Man; at least, if you do call your self so, no Body else will call you so.

You are a Stranger, an *English* Man, and one that has declar'd your self for the Union: Now you can never steer steady between these Rocks: If you will do Justice to *Scotland*, you must say some very coarse things of *England*. Now, if you do the last, you will betray your own Countrey, and be a Knave to that; if you do not do the first, you will be a Knave to this, and fall short of your Proposal.

To this I freely Answer, I am a plain Dealer; I can say the coarsest things that are, of my own Countrey, ay, and of you too, Gentlemen, and hope you will bear with it too, when they are

but True and Useful ———. Necessary Truth I profess to speak, and no Power so strong, Person so high, Malice so great, or Passion so hot, as ever yet fear'd me from it ———, nor ever shall. And this brings me to another part of the Work I have not yet mentioned, and which shall finish this long Introduction. ———, and that is, That this Paper has from its first coming out, declared War against Vice, Hypocrisie, and all Sorts of Immorality, in whatsoever Shapes, Dress, Posture or Disguise they lurk in the World.

If, in this War, I meet with Clamour, Railery, Slander, Abuse, Affronts, ill Nature, ill Manners, nay, even to Insult and Assassination, I have nothing but what I expected from the beginning ———.

*The Knaves will all agree to call him Knave.*  
Earl of Rochester, Po. p. 62.

He that reproves other Mens Crimes, shall be sure to have all his own written in his Forehead ———; and, which is worse, shall have more than his own plac'd there, Lying, Slander, Malice, and all the Detachments Sathan can spare out of his Infernal Armies shall attack him. ———; so let them attack me ———, and yet this Reed shaken with the Wind shall be made a Wall of Brass, if backt from above against all the Degeneracy of this Age, and



and this little Agent shall hang up their Crimes in the Sun till their Stench becomes Noisome to themselves, and they grow asham'd of their open Folly; Sin shall retreat to its Native Companion Shame, and fly together to Darknesh and Corners; Men shall no more defy Heaven, brave the Law, and insult Justice, and not be told of it.

No Man is too great for Reproof, his Character indeed may make it a sort of Boldness —; But Vice is of an assimilating Nature, and makes a Noble Man become vile like it self —. He that is mean enough to stoop to the Crime, is not at all further debas'd in submitting to the Reproof —. Scandal divests a Person of his Nobility, all the Trophies of Birth, Family, Titles and Blood hang like fine Feathers daub'd with the Street Dirt, when the Person degenerates from the Vertue and Honour of his Ancestors that gave him those Titles.

The Appellation of Lord ill becomes a Man of Vice, he stoops to a Meanness below his Dignity when he Sins, and for the time lays by his Nobility, levels himself with the Rabble, and merits no more Regard.

It is true, there are Discretions to be used in our Reproofs, and I hope I shall not break Bound:—; But there is a Plainness suitable

to good Manners too, and that I hope no Body will take ill.

It is in vain to reprove Vice with a soft Voice, to be too Modest is to be too Foolish, to do any Good, Vertue and Honour need no Blushes; Shame belongs to Crime, he that is Guilty ought to be asham'd, not he that tells him of it——. Truth ought to be spoken like it self, boldly and openly and if we expect to wound the Crimes we speak against, our Words must be pointed and keen, that they may answer the End of Reproof.

And here, before I speak any thing of the reproving the vile Behaviour of the Age, I mean as to their common Street Morals, give me Leave to tell you all very plainly, my Method will be something new —: It will be none of my Business to Exclaim against the poor despicable Wretches, whose Oaths, Drunkenness, and other Wickedness are the common Subject of our Societies for Reformation —; but as all Evils are best to be cured in their Causes, so, Gentlemen, my Discourse will come nearer home.

If you will Reform the Nation, you that call your selves Reformers, bear with me to tell you, You must first Reform your selves —, and I must, as I have done formerly in *England*, make a solemn Protest, and I here take Instruments in the hands of the whole Nation,

Nation, That it is Unreasonable and Unjust, an Injury to the common People, and a Dishonour to the Gentry and Nobility to make Laws, Acts of Parliament, Proclamations, Declarations, City-Laws or Burgh-Laws against Vice and Immorality, while you Execute those Laws upon the Poor, Mean and Common People only, and your selves go Unpunished in the open Commission of the same. This has been the Grievance in *England*; if it should spread into *Scotland*, it must have the same ill Consequence; a Drunken Justice of the Peace, a Lewd Magistrate, a Swearing Gentleman; Can these be capable of Reformation? Can these be capable of Checking and Discouraging Vice and Prophaneness in a Nation? The Behaviour of the Gentlemen will always be Exemplar, and have an Influence upon the Manners of the common People: If my own Watch goes wrong, it deceives me and no Body else, but if the Town Clock goes wrong, it deceives the whole Parish.

The way to Reform a Nation, besides good Laws, is to have the Nobility, Gentry and Magistracy of the Countrey Discourage Vice, and bring it out of Use by their own Example; the People are guided by Example more than by Precept; the Humour of the Age is to follow the Fashions; if you will have Vice and Prophaneness suppress, do

but bring it out of Fashion, and the Work is done; what the Gentry practise, the common People will imitate; if the Gentlemen bring Crime to be unfashionable, if Oaths, Drunkenness and Lewdness be left out of the Mode of Behaviour, the People will reform insensibly——, they'll grow Vertuous for meer Pride, and the Shame of being out of the Fashion.

At least, the Gentlemen may then take upon them to Govern; they may Punish without Reproach to themselves: A Justice of Peace may set a Drunkard in the Stocks, or a Whore to the Whipping Post without blushing, and the Poor can have no Objection against the Discipline of their Rulers.

But while you punish the Poor, and the Rich go free, while you put the Laws in the hands of Men of Vice, to Execute upon the vicious, while Magistrates commit the Crimes they punish, you must expect to finish no Reformation in *Scotland*, any more than they have in *England*.

*Our Modes of Vice from high Examples came,  
And 'tis Example only must Reclaim,  
Law only aids Men to conceal their Crimes,  
But 'tis Example must Reform the Times,  
The Magistrates must mighty Crime forbear,  
Be Faultless first themselves, and then severe,  
The Men of Honour must from Vice dissent,  
Before the Rakes and Bullies will Repent.  
If once the Mode of Virtue would begin,  
The poorer sort would be ashamed to Sin.*

*For shame your Reformation Clubs give o're,  
And jest with Men, and jest with Heaven no more,  
But if you would avenging Power appease,  
Avert the Indignation of the Skyes,  
Impending Ruin avoid, and calm the Fates,  
Ye Hypocrites Reform your Magistrates.*

Reformation of Manners, P. 107.

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